(b) whether Telecommunication Consultants of India alongwith IBM and Tata Consultancy Services bagged the tender for setting up part three of project's second phase;

(c) if so, the reasons for the delay; and

(d) by when the project will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The National Internet Backbone Project which was scheduled to be completed by 05.10.2005 is now likely to be completed by July, 2006.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The reasons for the delay are as follows:

(i) Delayed supply/non-supply of some hardware and software by the supplier.

(ii) Delay in Customization of various software required in the project.

(d) The project is likely to be completed by July, 2006.

Amendments to the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885

726. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 to prevent the State from invading the privacy of individuals by tapping their telephones on the plea of public interest;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when it is likely to be brought forward?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted to examine the existing provisions of Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 relating to interception and tapping of telephones.

The Committee is to submit its recommendations within 45 days from 21-02-2006.

(c) No time frame has been fixed at present.

Telecom services in rural areas of Rajasthan

727. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes for providing telecom services in rural areas of Rajasthan;

(b) the telephone density in rural and urban areas in Rajasthan;

(c) whether the telephone density in rural areas is less than in urban areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the number of villages in Rajasthan where "wireless in local loop" services have been provided and the number of villages where no telecom facilities exist; and

(f) the steps taken to provide telecom facilities in those villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEELAHMAD): (a) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is supporting the provision of telecom facilities in rural areas of the country including in the State of Rajasthan. USOF has entered into agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and private service providers for providing following facilities in the rural areas of Rajasthan:

* Provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) by November, 2007 in 12,386 remaining unconnected eligible villages. This excludes villages having less than 100 population, lying in thick forest area/naxalite infested areas etc.
* Provision of Rural Community Phone (RCPs) by September, 2007 in 1,416 villages in Rajasthan service area with population of more than 2000 and not having a Public Call Office (PCO).
* Provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 203 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).